

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 9 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-4 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Publication No. 2002/0039944 to Ali ("Ali"). This rejection is respectfully traversed as follows.

It is respectfully submitted that Ali does not teach or suggest all the elements of independent claims 1 or 9. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Ali does not disclose arrest elements co-operating with said arms for limiting opening of said arms with respect to one another, as recited in independent claims 1 and 9. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 9 and the claims that depend therefrom are patentable over Ali.

Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ali in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0216203 to Oliver et al. ("Oliver"). This rejection is respectfully traversed as follows.

Claim 6 has been canceled herein and the arrest elements feature claimed therein has been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 9. It is respectfully submitted that Oliver does not teach or suggest arrest elements on said mobile element, as recited in independent claims 1 and 9. Rather, in Oliver stops 130 and 131 are not on a mobile element but are firmly secured on base 122, which is in turn secured to a fixed wall of the engine 110. Oliver at ¶¶ 0044-45.

One advantage of the present invention is that when arrest elements are provided on the mobile element, the tensioning on the spans of the transmission is obtained by the spring where the arms are not abutting and by the constraint imposed on the belt by the arms when they are abutting the respective arrest element. Indeed, in operation, it is experienced that when the spans reach a tension such that arms 13, 14 contact the respective arrest element, a further increase of power transferred by the belt drive results in a higher tensioning on the spans or, in other words, in an increasing pressure applied by both arms on the respective arrest element. In addition, the arms and the arrest elements move during operation and adapt to the many working conditions of the belt drive and this combines with the action of the blocked arms to properly tension the belt drive. Indeed, according to the amended claim 1, arrest elements provided on mobile element 12 do

provide a tensioning action useful for the normal operation of the belt drive and not only a maximum limit to be reached in abnormal conditions, which is instead the function taught in Oliver where the arrest elements are secured to the engine wall. Therefore, a hybrid tensioner is obtained that loads the belt with the spring and through the constraint defined by arrest elements.

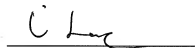
For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 9 and the claims that depend therefrom are patentable over Ali in view of Oliver.

Conclusion

It is believed that all objections and rejections in the application have been addressed and that the present application is in condition for allowance. A favorable reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is solicited. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this and concurrent replies to charge payment (or credit any overpayment) to Deposit Account No. 50-2298 for any additional required fees.

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Respectfully submitted,



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